

- In 2007, about 10 million young people ages 12 to 20 reported drinking alcoholic beverages during the month of a nationwide survey.
- Of that group, 7.2 million consumed five or more alcoholic drinks within a couple of hours of their first one (called binge drinking).
- Past month alcohol use was reported by 63.7 % of full-time college students.
- In Mississippi, 2,139 young people under 21 were arrested for driving under the influence (DUI) in 2007 — committing two illegal acts, since drinking alcohol before the age of 21 is illegal.

At the height of growing consumption of **caffeinated alcoholic beverages** by college students and after months of investigation, Mississippi Attorney General Jim Hood joined his counterparts from 13 other jurisdictions in reaching an agreement with MillerCoors to end production of the highly popular caffeinated alcoholic energy drink, Sparks. The company also committed not to produce caffeinated alcoholic beverages in the future. Months earlier, Anheuser-Busch had voluntarily agreed to end production of its version of the alcoholic beverages, marketed primarily to college students. Research by the Center for Science in the Public Interest had shown that the young consumers of the caffeinated alcoholic beverages were significantly more likely to:

- have alcohol-related incidents that required medical treatment.
- have multiple passengers while driving under the influence.
- binge drink.
- be victims of sexual assault.

## Where To Go For Help Or Information

**Mississippi Department of Mental Health**  
24 hours a day every day / Toll-Free 1-877-210-8513  
[www.dmh.state.ms.us](http://www.dmh.state.ms.us)

**Mothers Against Drunk Driving / MISSISSIPPI**  
P O BOX 97845 / PEARL, MS 39288-7845  
(601) 939-0233 / fax: (601) 939-1986  
<http://www.madd.org/MS>

**Friends of Alcoholics**  
Jackson, MS  
(601) 362-4275

**American Council on Alcoholism**  
800-527-5344  
[www.aca-usa.org](http://www.aca-usa.org)

**National Institute on Alcohol Abuse & Alcoholism**  
(301) 443-3885  
<http://www.niaaa.nih.gov>

**Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)**  
1-877-SAMHSA-7  
[www.samhsa.org](http://www.samhsa.org)

**We Don't Serve Teens**  
*A National Campaign spearheaded by the  
Federal Trade Commission*  
<http://www.dontserveteens.gov/campaign.html>



*Attorney General Jim Hood*



For comprehensive information about this and related topics, see the **GUIDE TO CHILD SAFETY: A Parent's PLAN**, a booklet published by the Mississippi Attorney General's Office. The publication is available online at [www.agjimhood.com](http://www.agjimhood.com).

# Underage Drinking



## What Parents Should Know

*Prepared by the*  
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# Underage Drinking... *(continued)*

Mississippi's 2007 Youth Risk Behavior Survey of students in grades nine through twelve shows that youth alcohol abuse starts long before college and demonstrates clearly why parents should talk about alcohol with their children at an early age (between 9-11):

- 72.1% of Mississippi youth have tried alcohol.
- More than 40% admitted drinking one or more alcoholic beverages during the month before the poll.
- 21.1% of students reported that they drank heavily during the month before the survey.

Groups like the Mississippi Chapter of Youth In Action (YIA) work to reduce teen drinking. Placing underage drinking warning stickers on Gulf Coast convenience store cash registers before the July 4, 2008 weekend to help deter illegal purchase of beer and other alcoholic beverages is an example of a YIA activity.\*

The suggestions here include some tips from the national Youth In Action (YIA) website ([www.youthinaction.org](http://www.youthinaction.org)), the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism publication, *Talk to Your Child About Alcohol* ([http://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/MakeADiff\\_HTML/makediff.htm](http://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/MakeADiff_HTML/makediff.htm)), and other resources.

**1 Establish a Climate of Caring.** You can begin to do just that by making the following priorities:

- **Know where your child is** at all times. Have an understanding with your child

that you will call the home of the friend he or she is going to visit.

- **Encourage your child to invite friends** to your home so that you can get to know them.
- **Verbally commit to your child** that you will always **be available** to give him or her a ride if friends are drinking alcohol.
- **Show that you care.** Even though young teens may not always show it, they still need to know that they are important to their parents. Make it a point to regularly spend one-on-one time with your child—time when you can give him or her your loving, undivided attention. Some activities to share are a walk, a bike ride, a quiet dinner out, or a cookie baking session.
- **Draw the line.** Set clear, realistic expectations for your child's behavior. Establish appropriate consequences for breaking rules and consistently enforce them.
- **Offer acceptance.** Make sure your teen knows that you appreciate his or her efforts as well as accomplishments. Avoid hurtful teasing or criticism.
- **Understand that your child is growing up.** This does not mean a hands-off attitude. But as you guide your child's behavior, also make an effort to respect his or her growing need for independence and privacy.

## **2 Develop Family Rules About Drinking.**

When parents establish clear "no alcohol" rules and expectations, their children are less likely to begin drinking. Although each family should develop agreements about teen alcohol use that reflect their own beliefs and values, some possible family rules about drinking are:

- Children will not drink alcohol until they are at least 21 — the legal age in Mississippi.

- Older siblings will not encourage their younger brothers or sisters to drink and will not give them alcohol.
- Teens will not stay at parties where alcohol is served.
- Teens will not ride in a car with a driver who is or has been drinking.

**3 Set a Good Example.** Parents and guardians are important role models for their children—even children who are fast becoming teenagers. Studies indicate that if a parent uses alcohol, his or her children are more likely to drink as well. Whether you drink alcohol or not, you can take steps to help your child gain a proper perspective about alcohol use:

- Use alcohol moderately.
- Be careful not to communicate to your child that alcohol is a good way to handle problems. Saying, "I need a drink" is never wise.
- Let your child see that you cope with stress in healthy ways including exercise, listening to music, or talking with someone you trust.
- Never tell stories that make light of alcohol use or make it sound glamorous.
- Never drink and drive or ride in a car with a driver who has been drinking.
- When you entertain other adults, serve alcohol-free beverages and plenty of food.

**4 Get Help If Needed.** Sometimes even the most vigilant efforts of parents are not enough to prevent alcohol abuse by young people. If that's the case, the best thing to do is seek professional advice immediately. Your family physician or pediatrician is an excellent source of help. Another resource might be your minister, priest or rabbi, school guidance counselor or social worker. Other resources are listed on the back of this brochure.